

■ The Hero

I believe in doing this I will be a tragic hero. I was born strong but the environment is stronger than me. I don't really have any special powers to help me. Only my mind and those who support me.

—Tina

I'd like to make a drastic change in the way society works. I would like to make life easier, less complicated, and more equal, more fair. At least I believe that there's hope for the next generation, which would be our children. But it's not gonna happen until we get some kind of equality established among all of us. There are no simple answers for this. I feel it messing with my head every day in day out. In ten years, I'd like to be stable, in a job that I would be happy and proud of doing. Something I love like writing. Will this make me a hero? What do you think?

—Anonymous

RATIONALE

What Is the Unit of Study?

Students will study the evolution of the hero and also will analyze the concept of heroism. How do heroes reflect a society's needs and beliefs? Are heroes for children only? After Superman, what? What types of heroes are possible in a jaded modern age such as ours? Can today's values define a new type of heroism, or do they preclude it? Has every hero's asset—physical strength, beauty, intelligence, moral integrity—become tarnished by technological manipulation and materialism? Do today's would-be heroes stop in midheroic journey—becoming marginalized fanatics, languishing as political prisoners, suffering violent martyrdom?

Each student will read a novel or biography of his or her choice and will analyze the hero within it. Students will study Joseph Campbell's heroic cycle and also will learn to categorize heroes according to a progression delineated by Northrop Frye in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). They will generate their own definitions of heroism and apply all three of these analytical tools to the literary hero they have chosen. Presentation of this work and of the protagonist as "a hero" will be the final project for this unit.

Why Will Students Be Interested in Studying This?

Students will welcome the chance to express both their own emerging values and their cynicism. First, they enjoy figuring out what makes a character heroic, what distinguishes the people they admire. As adolescents, they are busy discriminating between and modeling themselves after various exemplars. Whether or not they can name a role model, they all will be able to point to sports figures, entertainers, relatives, and neighborhood legends who are everything they want to be.

Some students maintain that they have no heroes, that they respect only those characters who are succeeding by any means necessary—including walking all over everyone else. When these students define heroism, they maintain that it cannot guarantee survival; on the contrary, it invites doom and failure. Can heroism stand up against self-preservation? In the course of this unit, these students will come to appreciate and understand different types of heroes. They will find meaning and take solace in the more complex realistic or ironic heroes as described by Frye. They will learn to recognize true heroism in a modern guise, which can include failing before the shibboleths of an elite. In doing so, they come to a fuller understanding of their own heroes, values, and goals.

Why Do Students Need to Study This?

If we do live in an age bereft of heroes, what of it? Joseph Campbell says that people in every age have a need to believe in heroes, that heroes provide a crucial paradigm. Their stories are a universal model for human maturation: Each of us must go on a heroic journey of a sort, which includes a departure (from childhood), a series of trials (adolescent rebellion/alienation and search for our own identity), and finally, fulfillment and enriching return (to familial and/or social interdependence).

At first glance, this progress does seem to be an ideal that is unrealized for much of modern humanity. Instead, life is seen as an unresolvable struggle. Few people—especially those handicapped by dissolved families, poverty, and dysfunctional communities—find that fulfillment, that certainty, that wholeness. And yet, this is exactly what we need to do. In any culture, under any condition, a life so lived is the essence of human prerogative. It is totally and ultimately heroic.

As teenagers, as disenfranchised peoples, as young adults scared about survival and determining their own priorities—what could serve these students better than a course designed to help them recognize the heroic in the human experience?

Why Teach This Unit Now?

This unit works well as a final year-end project. The suggested readings are all stimulating and short, and class discussions around them are usually lively. Students also enjoy the two critical theories—Campbell's cycle and Frye's sociohistorical progression—even though they may seem at first too sophisticated for teens in high school. Individual pacing is possible with this unit: Students determine their own schedules and deadlines and devote much of their time to independent reading. It also accommodates instructors' busy spring schedules. The final presentation, in place of a test, allows instructors to attend to the more idiosyncratic tasks and scheduling needs of the final weeks of school.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. What is heroism? What are the characteristics of the hero?
2. What is their purpose in society?
3. Are heroes viable in our society today?
4. What is the relationship of power to heroism?

TERMINAL OBJECTIVES

- To read and present a "hero" book of student's own choosing
- To determine individual reading and written project deadlines for this work
- To write an extended definition of heroism with various popular textual references
- To reflect on unit topic and key questions in relation to students' own lives

MATERIALS

General References (for instructors)

- Campbell, Joseph, with Bill Moyers (1988), *The Power of Myth*

Major Works

- Individual students choose their own major work

Chapters and Excerpts From Longer Works

- Hamilton, Edith (1940), "Theseus" from *Mythology* (pp. 149-157)
- Hayton-Keeva, Sally (1987), "Karla Ramirez" from *Valiant Women in War and Exile: Thirty-Eight True Stories* (pp. 1-6)
- Terkel, Studs (1974), "Herb Goro: A Fireman" from *Working* (pp. 446-449)

Poems

- Levertov, Denise (1985), "The Altars in the Street"
- Updike, John (1957/1984), "Ex-Basketball Player"
- Yevtushenko, Yevgeny (1966), "Conversation With an American Writer"

Songs

- Lennon, John (1970), "Working Class Hero"
- Springsteen, Bruce (1980), "Pointblank" and "Glory Days"

Films

- *The Terminator* (1984)

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

- Day 1: Lesson 1: Use HANDOUT 1: POPULAR HEROES?
Discuss heroism. Assign Journal 1.
- Day 2: Lesson 2: Use HANDOUT 2: CAMPBELL'S CYCLE.
Discuss, analyze personal hero.
- Day 3: Use HANDOUT 3: FRYE'S PROGRESSION OF HEROES.
Discuss, analyze heroes.
- Day 4: Lesson 3: Read and discuss "Theseus."
- Day 5: Discuss "Theseus" in groups.
Analyze myth using Campbell's cycle. Use HANDOUT 4: THESEUS'S
HEROIC JOURNEY.
- Day 6: Lesson 4: Read "Karla Ramirez."
Assign HANDOUT 5: KARLA RAMIREZ: ARCHETYPAL HERO; have students
finish this for homework.
- Day 7: Discuss HANDOUT 5.
Read "Herb Goro: A Fireman" from Terkel's *Working*.
- Day 8: Discuss reading in small groups.
- Day 9: Lesson 5: Begin explaining how to classify various items.
Play Categories Game.
Homework: HANDOUT 6: GENERAL CATEGORIES WORKSHEET (Part I).
- Day 10: Go over HANDOUT 6.
Discuss next step in the extended definition process: differentiating
related terms.
Differentiate underlined terms from other members of the same
general category.
- Day 11: Lesson 6: GO OVER HANDOUT 7: EXTENDED DEFINITION SAMPLE
AND WORKSHEET.
- Day 12: Distribute HANDOUT 8: PLANNING AN EXTENDED DEFINITION OF
HEROISM; students work alone or with partners.
Homework: Students begin writing rough draft for extended definition.
- Day 13: Work on rough draft in class.
Homework: Finish rough draft.

- Day 14: Work with peer to edit rough draft using HANDOUT 9: PEER EDITING CHECK SHEET.
Work on extended definition in class; finish writing independently.
- Day 15: Lesson 7: Read Yevtushenko and Levertov poems; discuss.
- Day 16: Extended definition due.
Assign Journal 2.
- Day 17: Lesson 8: Use HANDOUT 10: SAMPLE READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE and HANDOUT 11: SUGGESTED READINGS FOR "THE HERO" to explain independent reading project.
Discuss possible works; tell students to choose a work by a specific date.
- Day 18: Lesson 9: Discuss current events and clippings depicting antiheroes.
Listen to/read antihero lyrics.
- Day 19: Read Updike's poem. Use HANDOUT 12: ANTIHEROES.
Assign "Glory Days" creative writing (see Sample Student-Written "Glory Days" Poems).
- Day 20: Lesson 10: Complete HANDOUT 13: "THE HERO" READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE.
Determine individual reading schedules and assignments.
- Day 21: Students read independently in class.
- Day 22: Students read independently and work on independent writing assignments.
- Day 23: First reading and assignment due date.
- Day 24: Students finish all delinquent written work and work on independent writing assignments.
- Day 25: Small group informal reports; independent reading.
- Day 26: Second reading and assignment due date.
- Day 27: Students read and write independently.
- Day 28: Book talks with partners.
- Day 29: Third reading and assignment due date.
- Day 30: Students read and write independently.
- Day 31: Fourth reading and assignment due date.

- Day 32: Explain final presentation assignment.
Use HANDOUT 14: PRESENTATION GUIDELINES.
- Day 33: Lesson 11: See *The Terminator*.
- Day 34: *The Terminator*.
- Day 35: *The Terminator*.
- Day 36-end of unit Lesson 12: Written hero analyses or presentations due. Use
HANDOUT 15: PRESENTATION EVALUATIONS.
Assign Journal 3.

LESSON 1: WHAT IS A HERO?

Objectives

- To begin discussing the concepts of heroes and heroism
- To name some popular heroes
- To distinguish between heroism and fame
- To reflect on a personal hero

Materials

- HANDOUT 1: POPULAR HEROES?

Procedures

- Open the discussion of the hero by asking students to name some heroes they believe in now or used to believe in as children. Distribute HANDOUT 1: POPULAR HEROES? Have students work on these individually.

- Discuss student responses together.

1. Did students name famous figures, heroic figures, or some of each?
2. What characteristics distinguish the famous people from the heroic ones?
3. Is fame the same as heroism?

- Discuss the concept of heroism as an altogether dubious proposition in this modern age of dollars, co-optation, and corruption in high places. Some students may voice cynicism about "heroes," claiming that it's all cartoons and naive fantasy; no one is really a hero anymore. If they do take this tack, pursue it with searching questions:

1. Why do there seem to be no more heroes?
2. What one quality are all modern candidates for heroism missing?
3. What is this quality that seems to define heroism? Integrity? Unselfishness? Conviction? The ability to appeal to many disparate groups?
4. Do heroes have to please everyone in the world or just certain segments of the population?
5. Is a hero really a hero if only a few people think so? If only the hero thinks so?

If students do not engage readily in active discussions of heroes and heroism at this point, it is useful to play a devil's advocate role. Instructors might begin by suggesting the following thesis: There are no heroes anymore;

there can't be. Continue with the types of questions outlined in the above procedure.

- Assign Journal 1: Write about a hero you had as a child. What could this hero do? Why did you admire this hero? Did you want to be like this hero? How did you feel when you were in his or her presence?

HANDOUT 1: POPULAR HEROES?

Directions: Fill in the boxes with names and qualities of the following types of heroes.

TYPE OF HERO	NAMES	HEROIC QUALITIES
Sports Heroes		
Historical Heroes (explorers, cowboys, outlaws, statesmen, military leaders)		
Cult Heroes (figures special to one group of people; usually possess outstanding vision or talent)		
Fictitious Superheroes (characters from movies, comics, cartoons)		
Personal Heroes (role models, family members, friends)		

LESSON 2: THEORIES OF THE HERO

Objectives

- To become familiar with two theories associated with heroism
- To practice applying these theories to personal heroes

Materials

- HANDOUT 2: CAMPBELL'S CYCLE: THE ARCHETYPAL HEROIC JOURNEY
- HANDOUT 3: FRYE'S PROGRESSION OF HEROES

Procedures

- Briefly introduce Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) as a scholar, storyteller, writer, editor, and teacher:

In his work Campbell tried to explain the relevance and power that myths still hold for people today. Campbell said that myths are clues to certain experiences and spiritual truths. All cultures have stories and rituals that describe human struggle with disaster, triumph, heartache, and knowledge. These common human experiences, or archetypes, pervade the mythologies of every time and culture. Today as we struggle with modern disaster, triumph, heartache, and knowledge, we can recognize and learn from the mythological archetypes described by Campbell. (See Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, 1988.)

- Define *archetype*: a model or original version of a form. An archetype has significance because it is the first, most perfect, and most true example of a form. Calling something an *archetype* confers gravity and importance.

- Distribute HANDOUT 2: CAMPBELL'S CYCLE: THE ARCHETYPAL HEROIC JOURNEY. This handout describes the archetypal heroic journey. Every hero departs one environment or condition, finds an "answer" through various experiences and trials, and brings a richer condition to the world and him- or herself. Campbell breaks down every hero's journey into the four stages shown on this sheet:

1. Departure
2. Testing
3. Fulfillment
4. Return

- Flesh out the sketch on the handout with commentary. Students should add notes to their handouts based on instructor's commentary:

Stage 1: Departure. The hero may not be aware of his or her true identity. The hero experiences some type of loss or privation. She or he recognizes a personal need or a larger environmental problem and sets out to try to find answers. This is a call to adventure. Often the hero is met by a helper at this stage.

Stage 2: Testing. The hero faces many trials and adventures. Typical trials include fighting a monster of some sort, battling a brother, abduction, crossing the sea, crucifixion, going into the belly of the whale, loss of limbs, and so forth. These experiences are an induction: The hero crosses a threshold, leaving ordinary experience behind. She or he enters the belly of the beast in preparation for the "big one."

Stage 3: Fulfillment. The hero slays the dragon or otherwise achieves his or her goal. Fulfillment can take many forms. The hero can literally slay a minotaur or other grisly beast, come back from the dead, find and forgive a father figure, enter into a sacred marriage, or obtain a special curative elixir. This fulfillment usually ends with the hero in flight.

Stage 4: Return. The hero returns to the world with what has been lost or with some other life-giving quality. This return/resurrection/rescue is accompanied by deep sadness. The hero enriches the world but always sacrifices something that she or he loves. Each heroic journey makes the world a better place. In the process, the hero gains maturity and finds him- or herself.

- Encourage questions and commentary from students on Campbell's cycle. Discuss the progress of a few popular heroes through the cycle, applying Campbell's stages to watersheds and events in their stories. Suggested heroes: Moses, Jesus, Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars*, and so on.

- Once students are comfortable with Campbell's cycle, ask each to write a short paragraph that applies the cycle to the hero he or she named in Journal Assignment 1. This exercise can be done for homework. If students do not feel that their privacy is invaded, they may try this activity with a partner, reading each other's journals and discussing how Campbell's cycle applies to each other's heroes.

- Next, introduce Northrop Frye's progression of heroes. Distribute HAND-OUT 3: FRYE'S PROGRESSION OF HEROES. Northrop Frye says that you can tell a lot about a culture by the type of heroic literature it generates. Again, flesh out information on the handout with commentary. Students should add notes to their handouts based on instructor's commentary:

Different cultures and eras produce different types of heroes.

Ancient Greeks' stories of supernatural gods and their powers explained the workings of the universe. Their *mythological heroes* were capable of miracles; their exploits accounted for mysteries and forces of the natural world.

As time passed, people began to see men, aided by gods, as the center of the universe. Special people, such as kings and churchmen, ruled the lives of others with their considerable, divine powers. Legends arose around the great deeds of *romantic heroes*.

With the Renaissance and the Reformation, science rose to preeminence. People no longer accepted heroes with special powers and supernatural abilities. It seemed that some people were just better than others. *Tragic heroes*—people of superior capabilities who failed only because of an inability to rise above some aspect of their environment—became popular.

In the beginning of the modern age, we believed that some people could rise to the occasion and be capable of greatness: *realistic heroes*. We have valued soldiers, great leaders, and people who are able to put others' safety before their own.

Now it seems we are not in control of our lives at all. Technology has taken over, and we are at the mercy of all-powerful institutions and environments. We do appreciate people who can rise above this reality, but we are most drawn to people who cannot. These *antiheroes*, or *ironic heroes*, make us feel a little better about our own impotence. We're not so bad; everyone is struggling.

Individuals of different ages relate to different types of heroes.

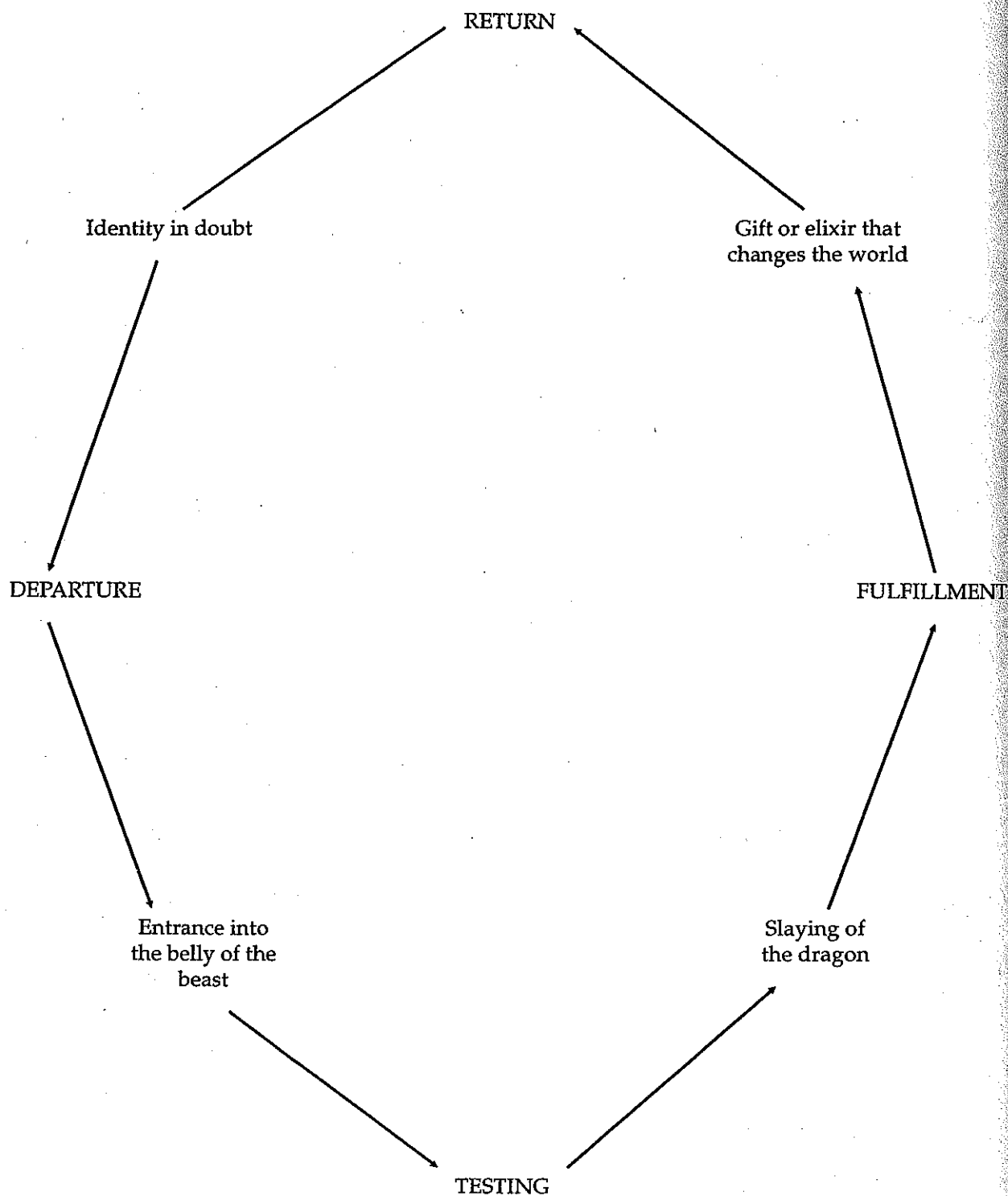
Mythological heroes satisfy children because kids are comfortable with the idea that there are beings powerful enough to read minds and stop the world from turning. These heroes answer a child's need to see someone in control. Kids also suspend disbelief easily; they accept and enjoy flying caped crusaders and giant turtles who speak.

Many teenagers are baffled or angered by their lack of control. They appreciate others who "rage against the machine" and recognize them as antiheroes. When teens find artists and musicians trying to express the same feelings, their own sense of alienation and heroic struggle is given voice and confirmed.

- Encourage questions and commentary from students on Frye's progression. Ask students to fill in the blanks with other examples. Name a few heroes and ask the class to categorize them. For example: Hercules (mythological or romantic); Rambo (romantic); the late Kurt Cobain of the band Nirvana (ironic).

- Once students are comfortable with Frye's progression, ask them to categorize the heroes they named on HANDOUT 1. Also ask into which category the hero they named in Journal Assignment 1 falls. If desired, students can write a short paragraph that explains the categorization of their hero.

HANDOUT 2: CAMPBELL'S CYCLE: THE ARCHETYPAL HEROIC JOURNEY



HANDOUT 3: FRYE'S PROGRESSION OF HEROES

Mythological Hero

- Different from other people
- Superior in ability and intelligence
- Can control the environment
- Divine or semidivine
- Often believed in by children

Mythological heroes: Superman, Thor, _____

Romantic Hero

- Human—but like a superhuman, is still special and can control environment
- Gets help from enchanted weapons, talking animals, witches
- Requires a stretch of the imagination; natural laws are slightly suspended
- Sometimes gets help from another, supernatural world

Romantic heroes: King Arthur, Rambo, _____

Tragic Hero

- A superior human but flawed in some way (not perfect)
- Still subject to environment and to "cruel fate"
- Born special in some way
- A leader (often eloquent)
- Fits many military men who have ascended to "bigger than life" status

Tragic heroes: Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Macbeth, _____

(continued)

Realistic Hero

- One of us; definitely human
- Momentarily transcends the environment
- Made special—brave, courageous, determined—for a short time
- Fits some athletes and rescuers

Realistic heroes: Michael Jordan, firefighters, _____

Ironic/Antihero

- Inferior human, totally at the mercy of the environment
- Makes us recognize the frustration or the absurdity of modern life
- Makes us feel superior to him or her because of the situation she or he is in
- Often a loser who prevails due to sheer guts, not ability
- Is this all we have left in modern times?

Antiheroes: Rodney King, Rocky, _____

LESSON 3: THE MYTHOLOGICAL HERO

Objectives

- To read a classic mythological heroic journey
- To analyze this myth according to the theories presented in Lesson 2

Materials

- "Theseus" in Hamilton's *Mythology*
- HANDOUT 4: THESEUS'S HEROIC JOURNEY AS ANALYZED WITH CAMPBELL'S CYCLE

Procedures

- Distribute "Theseus" and have students read on their own. When they are done reading, discuss the story by asking students basic questions about the events, characters, and heroic archetype:

1. Why did Theseus take the land route instead of the sea route? (Theseus wanted to prove self; to go by the more difficult route would be more heroic.)
2. How was Theseus's identity in question? (Theseus did not live with his father; he could claim Aegeus as father only if he was strong enough to roll the rock off the sword and shoes.)
3. Who was Theseus's helper? What did she or he provide? (Ariadne gave him thread to trace his way out of the labyrinth.)
4. Why was it obvious or likely that Theseus would forget to take down the black sails? (Many possible reasons: a. he wanted to kill and succeed his father, Aegeus; b. this is the one flaw in his otherwise perfect character; c. the myth needed to account for the name of the Aegean sea; d. he was distracted by the loss of Ariadne.)
5. What does Theseus give to his city that had never been tried before? What part of the trip does this represent and why? (Theseus gives Athens democracy, the elixir that changed and enriched the world.)
6. It is said that the hero's journey takes him somewhere—psychologically as well as physically. How does Theseus change from the beginning of his journey to his return? (Theseus left with no conscious moral objective; he just wanted to be a hero. He returned as a selfless adult with a noble purpose: bringing democracy.)

- Divide students into groups to discuss and/or write answers to the following reflective questions:

1. What deficiency prompts Theseus's journey? What does this tell you about his psychological state?

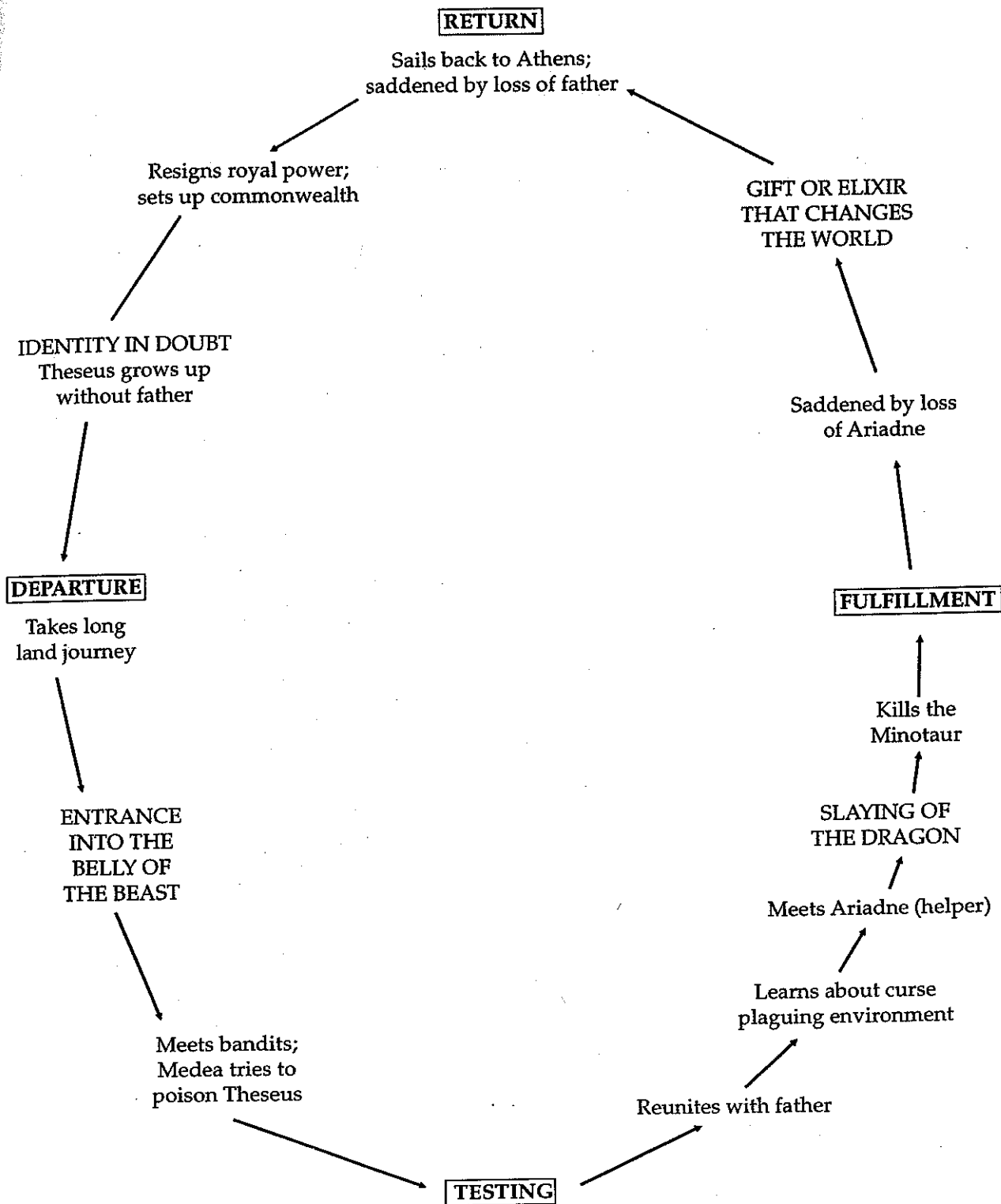
2. Do you think Theseus was destined to be a hero? Why or why not?
3. Why did he want to "get in good" with Athenians once he was recognized as Aegeus's son? What did he decide to do?
4. What is a labyrinth, and why is it a particularly appropriate place for Theseus to slay the dragon?
5. How did Ariadne help Theseus? How did she challenge him? Did he meet this challenge?
6. Classify Theseus according to Frye's progression. (He is a classic mythological hero.)

- Draw a circle on the board to represent Campbell's archetypal heroic journey, and take Theseus through Campbell's cycle with students. Distribute HANDOUT 4: THESEUS'S HEROIC JOURNEY AS ANALYZED WITH CAMPBELL'S CYCLE to students if desired.

- If instructors have easy access to copying, they should distribute another copy of HANDOUT 2: CAMPBELL'S CYCLE: THE ARCHETYPAL HEROIC JOURNEY and ask students to note details from Theseus's journey on the sheet where they fit into the cycle. Otherwise students can sketch their own versions of the cycle and take notes on their "homemade handouts."

Tell students that this analysis provides a model: As students now are analyzing Theseus's story, so too will each student in the class need to analyze another hero's journey. Theseus (and other readings in subsequent lessons) will give the students practice.

HANDOUT 4: THESEUS'S HEROIC JOURNEY AS ANALYZED WITH CAMPBELL'S CYCLE



LESSON 4: THE REALISTIC HERO

Objectives

- To read accounts of realistic heroes
- To analyze these accounts according to the theories presented in Lesson 2
- To reflect on personal feelings and other current attitudes toward heroes

Materials

Short accounts of realistic heroes. I use:

- "Karla Ramirez" from Hayton-Keeva's *Valiant Women in War and Exile* (pp. 1-6)
- "Herb Goro: A Fireman" from Terkel's *Working* (pp. 446-449)
- Yevtushenko's poem "Conversation With an American Writer"
- HANDOUT 5: KARLA RAMIREZ, ARCHETYPAL HERO

Procedures

- Distribute Karla Ramirez's story, found in the collection of first-person tales *Valiant Women in War and Exile*. This short account works well when read aloud.

At this point, it is a good idea to tell students that they will be responsible for choosing their own major work to read for the unit. They can start thinking about books they would like to read or can at least get used to the idea that the teacher will not be reading with the class all together.

- Also distribute HANDOUT 5: KARLA RAMIREZ, ARCHETYPAL HERO. If students feel comfortable with the analysis of Theseus's story, they may complete this sheet for homework. Students may enjoy discussing Ramirez's story in small groups informally as they work together on completing this handout.

- Go over HANDOUT 5: KARLA RAMIREZ, ARCHETYPAL HERO. Answers may vary on this sheet. Encourage discussion and analysis of the events in Ramirez's life.

- Distribute excerpt ("Herb Goro: A Fireman") from Studs Terkel's *Working*. Students can read this short work aloud or to themselves. As they are reading, write the following questions on the board:

1. How does the firefighter feel about doing his job?

2. How do people in the neighborhood treat the firefighter?
3. What does he say is a firefighter's job today?
4. Why do you think the people in the street do not respect him?
5. What is his attitude toward the people he serves?
6. Do you think he is a hero? Why or why not?
7. What questions would you ask Herb Goro (or any firefighter, police officer, or other public servant who has opportunities to be a realistic hero) yourself?

- Discuss these questions or have students consider them in small groups. If students talk among themselves in groups, instructors should convene the groups afterward so that students can pose their own questions (question 7) for the whole class to consider.

HANDOUT 5: KARLA RAMIREZ, ARCHETYPAL HERO

Directions: In the spaces below, trace Ramirez's account of her life using the stages in Campbell's cycle.

THE HERO	KARLA RAMIREZ
Has a question about his or her identity; senses a lack or need	
Goes on a journey that tests or challenges him or her	
Meets a helper who provides a tool, weapon, etc.	
Accomplishes a major feat or succeeds in overcoming a major obstacle	
Brings a gift or elixir to the world that heals one of society's ills	
Other features that characterize this hero's story (consider motivation, sacrifice, self-evaluation, etc.)	
What type of hero is this according to Frye's progression?	

LESSON 5: EXTENDED DEFINITION: PREWRITING

Objectives

- To become familiar with processes requisite for writing complex definitions—specifically, classifying and differentiating related terms
- To become adept at using these processes to classify familiar concepts and terms

Materials

- Prepared game sheets for Categories Game (see procedures)
- HANDOUT 6: GENERAL CATEGORIES WORKSHEET

Procedures

(Many of the terms and procedures in this and the next lesson are adapted from Johannessen, Kahn, and Walter [1982], *Designing and Sequencing Prewriting Activities*.)

- At this point in the unit, students will be ready to figure out what does and does not constitute heroism. Explain that during the next few days students will polish their defining skills. Use a demonstration to illustrate the first step in defining any object or term: naming the general class to which it belongs. Hold up a dictionary. Ask the class to define it. Hold up a banana or a boot. Ask students to try to define the item. As the class offers various definitions of these items, it will become clear that the most basic information about any of them is its *general category*. (A dictionary is a book. A banana is a piece of fruit. A boot is a shoe.)

- Divide the class into two (or three or four) teams and prepare them to play the Categories Game. Explain that they will see lists of items and that their task is two-part: First, they must add one more term that fits into the general category. Then they will name the general category specifically. If they cannot do both these things, another team may try and thus can “steal” the first team’s points.

1. After the first group of terms is uncovered, whichever team first raises a hand will have 10 seconds to confer and proffer another term in the same category (25 points). Then they must name precisely the general category to which all terms belong (25 points).
2. If the team has completed both tasks successfully, they are to be awarded 50 points, and the play continues with the next series of terms. If students did not name a term that fit in the same general category or did not name the category correctly and/or specifically enough, they do not win any points. Even if the team correctly

deduced the general category, they must forfeit these 25 points if they first did not suggest a term that correctly belongs in that same general category. Other teams can try.

3. The other teams must correctly name a different term belonging to the correct general category. They also must name (or restate) the general category. They then are awarded 50 points.

It is important that students understand that this is not a guessing game; for that reason, I do not uncover items incrementally. Teachers may choose to do this and award more points for answers offered early (that is, when only one or two items are uncovered). This does increase the drama of the game. When we played the game like this, however, my students stopped thinking and started taking wild potshots. I felt that this did not advance the objectives of the exercise and amended game procedures accordingly.

To prepare for this game, I make nine large posters corresponding to nine general categories. On each of the posters, I list five items that fit into one general category. These categories are listed here for instructor's reference only.

SAMPLE CATEGORIES

I. Tide Bounce Downy Cheer Spray 'n Wash	II. Zeus Odin Shiva Mars Mercury	III. puma cheetah jaguar panther leopard	IV. Arnold Schwarzenegger Sylvester Stallone Errol Flynn Jean-Claude Van Damme Steven Seagal
(laundry products)	(pre-Christian gods)	(wild cats)	(action/adventure movie stars)
V. Vibe Omni GQ Jet Time	VI. march salsa swing waltz bossa nova	VII. Baldwin Wright Walker Morrison Ellison	VIII. adultery profanity stealing killing disrespecting parents
(magazines)	(musical rhythms)	(African American novelists)	(acts prohibited by the Ten Commandments)
			IX. lacrosse hockey soccer cricket hurling (sports)

• Whether students enjoy or have trouble with the game, it is advisable to distribute HANDOUT 6: GENERAL CATEGORIES WORKSHEET immediately. Help students struggling with the concept to work through a few of the series. Have students finish the sheet alone or for homework. They can create their own series for the blanks in 14-16. Make sure that all students have the worksheet in class the next day to work on the next step of the defining process.

- When students have completed the sheet, go over the answers (provided below). Students should try to refine general categories as precisely as possible. For example, when trying to define a term such as *Morocco*, stress that it is better to name the general class to which it belongs as *African countries* (as opposed to the more generic *countries*). Distinguish between a series of concrete objects (i.e., 10) and abstractions (i.e., 11). Ask for volunteers to share the series they created for 14 to 16.

- Next, draw students' attention to the italicized item in each series. Ask them what makes this item different from other items in the general category. Explain that this is the second task in defining a term. The students must identify characteristics that set it apart from other terms in the general category. In other words, they must differentiate related terms.

Answers for HANDOUT 6:

1. Chicago professional sports teams. *Bears*: professional football team in Chicago.
2. Holy scriptures of major world religions. *Quran*: the sacred book of Islam.
3. Dogs. *Jackal*: a type of wild dog found in Africa and Asia.
4. Greetings. *Hola*: Spanish greeting.
5. Sports apparel manufacturers. *Nike*: very popular brand advertised by Michael Jordan.
6. Sources of energy. *Nuclear*: energy from the inner core of the atom.
7. Countries in Africa. *Morocco*: Arab country on the north Atlantic coast.
8. Island countries. *Japan*: economic superpower in the Pacific.
9. Monetary units. *Ruble*: Russian money.
10. Cheeses. *Swiss*: pale yellow cheese with holes originally made in Switzerland.
11. Emotions. *Affection*: positive feeling of liking or warmth.
12. Inclement weather conditions. *Snow*: soft, cold flakes.
13. Rap artists. *Ice Cube*: actor and former member of NWA.

HANDOUT 6: GENERAL CATEGORIES WORKSHEET

Directions: Part I: Write the general category into which each series of items falls. In naming the category, make sure you are specific. Create your own series at the end for items 14 to 16.

One of the terms in each item is in *italics*. When you bring this sheet back to class tomorrow, we will work on Part II of this worksheet, which will deal with each italicized word.

1. Bulls, Cubs, *Bears*, White Sox: _____
2. Bible, *Quran*, Torah, Upanishads: _____
3. *jackal*, terrier, spaniel, bloodhound: _____
4. hello, bonjour, *hola*, guten tag: _____
5. *Nike*, Reebok, Converse, Fila: _____
6. *nuclear*, hydroelectric, natural gas, solar: _____
7. Somalia, Zaire, Mozambique, *Morocco*: _____
8. Haiti, Cuba, New Zealand, *Japan*: _____
9. peso, *ruble*, lira, pound: _____
10. *Swiss*, American, feta, Chihuahua: _____
11. jealousy, anger, *affection*, guilt: _____
12. wind, rain, *snow*, sleet: _____
13. *Ice Cube*, Queen Latifah, Ice T, Public Enemy: _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____

LESSON 6: WRITING AN EXTENDED DEFINITION OF HEROISM

Objectives

- To practice identifying and using processes involved in complex definitions, that is, classifying and differentiating related terms and generating defining criteria
- To adhere to a strict formula and criteria for writing an expository essay
- To use these skills to write an extended definition of heroism

Materials

- HANDOUT 7: EXTENDED DEFINITION SAMPLE AND WORKSHEET
- HANDOUT 8: PLANNING AN EXTENDED DEFINITION OF HEROISM
- HANDOUT 9: PEER EDITING CHECK SHEET

Procedures

The procedures in this lesson will vary depending on students' ability to process new information. High-skilled students may have had no difficulty absorbing the first two parts of an extended definition—determining the general category and identifying differentiating details. If this is the case, you simply can present the remaining steps of the formula and have them start outlining their definitions of heroism.

- Distribute HANDOUT 7: EXTENDED DEFINITION SAMPLE AND WORKSHEET. Read the definition together. Highlight the "general category" and "differentiating details" of greed, the concept that is being defined. Explain that there are six steps of writing an extended definition and that they already know the first two (determining the *general category* and identifying *differentiating details*). The next step is explaining and illustrating three *defining criteria*, or "necessary ingredients" of the term being defined. This third step is crucial; in it, students must struggle to get at the essence of the term or concept they are defining. Have the students highlight this information in the sample essay. Finally, go over the final step in writing an extended definition: presenting a *contrasting example*, or "gray area," in which some but not all of the defining criteria are met. The class should take notes in the margins of the worksheet in small groups, or they can complete it for homework.

- After students have completed the worksheet and have processed the components of the sample extended definition, I often have to run through some additional model definitions. *Love* and *freedom* work well:

Term	General Class	Distinguishing Features	Three Defining Criteria and Examples	Contrasting Example
Love	feeling	intense, positive	(1) Passion (Romeo and Juliet) (2) Intimacy (lovers in the film <i>Say Anything</i>) (3) Commitment (local couple who just had 50th anniversary)	A typical high school couple: Donna and Don have (1) passion and (2) intimacy but no (3) commitment
Freedom	emotional or physical condition or capability	involves another person or institution	(1) Choice (a person who is free to do volunteer work has choice) (2) Capability for action (if you have your own car, you often have capability for action) (3) Untroubled by consequences (a person who is racked with guilt is not free)	Lisa, 14 years old, wants to stay out late at a Friday night party. She (1) chooses to ignore her curfew; she says she (3) doesn't care if she gets in trouble but her mother picks her up at 10:30 so Lisa has no freedom to act (2) on her choice.

• Explain that students can begin writing their own extended definitions of heroism. Ask them to consider characters from the unit's readings, their observations, and their own gut feelings. Distribute HANDOUT 8: PLANNING AN EXTENDED DEFINITION OF HEROISM. Students may work on these alone or may work with a partner as they determine the general class, differentiating details, and necessary ingredients of heroism. (Even if students agree on these elements, their illustrating examples will need to differ.)

As with most writing exercises, I found it helpful to fill out a planning sheet myself, outlining my own extended definition of heroism. In this way, I was able to anticipate some of the difficulties students would experience working with this challenging, subjective assignment.

• Check over students' planning sheets and have them write drafts for their extended definitions. Use peers to check these drafts. Let students pick their own partners. Distribute HANDOUT 9: PEER EDITING CHECK SHEET. Walk them through proper usage of this sheet. More advanced students can and should devise their own peer editing criteria and check sheet.

My students' ideas about heroism vary greatly. They suggest that the general class to which heroism belongs is variously a "force," a "feeling," an "attitude," a

"process," or a "behavior." They distinguish it from other terms in the general class as being "very demanding" and "something you control yourself"; they say that "you need maturity to feel it." In their essays, students name such defining criteria as "a conscious moral objective," "sacrifice," "bravery," "indifference to public opinion," and "modesty."

HANDOUT 7: EXTENDED DEFINITION SAMPLE AND WORKSHEET

Directions:

1. Read the sample extended definition.
2. Underline the general category of greed and identify it as "general category" in the margin next to it.
3. Underline the differentiating details of greed and identify them as "differentiating details" in the margin.
4. Underline each of the three necessary ingredients and identify them as "necessary ingredient 1," and so forth, in the margins.
5. Find and label all examples of necessary ingredients in the margins. Underline what you think is the best part of the example.
6. Find and underline the contrasting example, and label it in the margin.

Beyond Rudeness

Greed is a type of desire. It is different from other desires because it is intense and knows no limits. Greed often is associated with money, but it is not limited to finances. A person can be greedy about lots of things, including money, love, food, and knowledge. In order to be greedy, a person must lack respect for others, have no common sense, and go too far.

The first essential ingredient of greed is nonconcern for others. Greedy people lack respect for others; in other words, they are selfish. For example, Claire was greedy at the Halloween party. She grabbed all the good candy, took three caramel apples, and had four pieces of cake. She did not care that there were people who were coming later and that there might not be enough left for them. "Too bad," she said as she stuffed her face. She definitely was being greedy because she was depriving someone of something and did not care about anyone but herself.

Another sure sign of greed is when people have no common sense about how much they need or about how much they really can use. If someone does not let reality determine the limits of what they take, then they are being greedy. For example, they were giving away free birdseed at the hardware store this weekend, and Mr. Waleed rushed over and took as much as they would give him: five pounds. He then kept on disguising himself so they wouldn't recognize him and proceeded to pick up 55 more pounds. There's no way he could use 60 pounds of birdseed. He did not use common sense. He was just being greedy.

The third important part of greed is excessiveness. Greedy people will get an idea that they need something and will not be able to recognize that they have gone too far. For example, Tony and Tina are going out, and Tony is very jealous of everything that Tina does. He wants her to call him the minute that she gets up and every hour on the hour. He even wants her to write down

every single person she talks to during the day. She is supposed to hand him this report every night. She is not allowed to talk to her sisters. He will not let her talk to any of her friends. She can't go anywhere without him. He wants all of Tina's time, all of her attention. He is being greedy: It is impossible for Tina to limit her interaction with the human race the way Tony wants her to. Still, he thinks he is doing right. His greed has blinded him to practical reality.

A person must display all three of these characteristics to be truly greedy. If people are stupid and excessive but not disrespectful of others' needs, then they are not being greedy. For example, Chris wasn't thinking when she bought her brand-new baby niece a lot of stuff. She spent over \$600 on baby clothes, including a teeny leather jacket. She spent hours and hours picking out stuffed animals: \$400 worth. She bought tiny books, tiny toys, tiny furniture, and even tiny headphones. Altogether she spent \$1500! This is too much to spend on the baby, whose parents already had bought everything she needs. The baby doesn't care what she wears, isn't aware of her furniture or toys, and can't even use half the things Chris bought. Chris is not being greedy because she isn't depriving anyone of anything. She's just being stupid and excessive. If you want to be greedy, you've got to be stupid, excessive, and selfish.

HANDOUT 8: PLANNING AN EXTENDED DEFINITION OF HEROISM

If you wanted to define heroism, you could just copy what the dictionary says. Or you could write your own, longer, extended definition of what it takes to be a hero in our time.

An extended definition is a five-part essay that defines a term and provides clear examples that illustrate that definition. This sheet will help you organize your thoughts on heroism so that you can write a coherent extended definition of this term.

THIS INFORMATION BELONGS IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OR SECTION:

1. What is the general class under which heroism belongs?
2. How is it different from other terms in this class?

EACH INGREDIENT AND EXAMPLE BELONGS IN A SEPARATE
PARAGRAPH OR SECTION:

3. What are three necessary ingredients of heroism? Provide examples from experience, movies, or songs. Make sure that you explain the particulars of each example.

a.

b.

c.

THIS BELONGS IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OR SECTION:

4. Think of a contrasting example. For instance, name a character that satisfies some but not all of the criteria.

HANDOUT 9: PEER EDITING CHECK SHEET

EDITORS: As you read your partner's rough draft, look for the following things. As you find them, help the writer by checking off each item. Offer suggestions in the sections for comments.

1. An indented first paragraph __
in which the writer clearly states the general category into which heroism falls __
and the things that make heroism different from other things in this category (the differentiating details) __.

Comments:

2. An indented second paragraph __
containing a clearly stated, essential ingredient of heroism __
and a clear, complete example of a person displaying this attribute __.

Comments:

3. An indented third paragraph __
containing a different, clearly stated essential attribute of heroism __
and a clear, complete example of a person displaying this attribute __.

Comments:

4. An indented fourth paragraph __
containing a different, clearly stated essential attribute of heroism __
and a clear, complete example of a person displaying this attribute __.

Comments:

5. An indented fifth paragraph __
that gives an example of a person who is not heroic because she or he has some but not all of the three essential attributes __.

Comments:

- And:
1. Look for spelling mistakes and circle the words that you think need to be checked.
 2. Make sure the writer has used complete sentences. Each sentence needs a subject and a verb. If you see a sentence that is missing a subject or a verb, circle it.

WRITERS: Use your partner's observations to fix your rough draft. When you copy it over, change it according to your partner's suggestions.

The whole packet—containing the planning worksheet, rough draft, this check sheet, and final draft—is due: _____